

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LAGOS 07045 311556Z

42

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INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LAGOS 7045

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SF, NI

SUBJECT: VISIT OF PROGRESSIVE PARTY LEADERS TO NIGERIA

SUMMARY: RECENT VISIT OF SOUTH AFRICAN PROGRESSIVE PARTY MEMBERS
COMMANDED MUCH NIGERIAN ATTENTION. FMG'S QUICK VISA ISSUANCE AND
HOSPITALITY UNPRECEDENTED. VISIT VALUABLE IN ESTABLISHING AT
LEAST ONE-WAY COMMUNICATION LINK, BUT ALL SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES
REMAIN UNCHANGED. END SUMMARY

1. SOUTH AFRICAN PROGRESSIVE PARTY MEMBERS COLIN EGLIN AND VANZYL
SLABBERT VISITED NIGERIA JULY 20-26 AND SUCCEEDED IN AROUSING
CONSIDERABLE INTEREST AND CONTROVERSY. THINKING THEY HAD LONG
SHOT CHANCE TO VISIT, SOUTH AFRICANS THROUGH INTERMEDIARIES
APPLIED FOR VISAS AT NIGERIAN HIGH COMMISSION IN LONDON. AFTER
DECENT INTERVAL FMG RESPONDED THAT VISA WOULD BE ISSUED IN LONDON,
WHERE SAS WERE QUITE WILLING TO GO DESPITE ITINERARY THAT TOOK
THEM TO EAST AFRICA. AFTER AMICABLE AND, FOR NIGERIA, RATHER
QUICK NEGOTIATIONS, FMG FINALLY ISSUED VISAS IN LUSAKA, WHICH WAS
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PAGE 02 LAGOS 07045 311556Z

FIRST IN SERIES OF SURPRISES.

2. UPON ARRIVING IN LAGOS JULY 20, EGLIN AND SLABBERT WERE MET BY MEA DEPUTY DIRECTOR PERMANENT SECRETARY DOVE-EDWIN INSTEAD OF RESIDENT AIRPORT PROTOCOL FACTOTUM. AT GOVERNMENT EXPENSE THEY WERE FURNISHED FEDERAL PALACE GUEST SUITE, A CHAUFFER-DRIVEN MERCEDES, ALL MEALS, INTERNAL AIR TRANSPORTATION, AND FINALLY PORTION OF INTERNATIONAL AIR FARE NECESSARY TO ENABLE THEM TO MAKE PLANE CONNECTION.

3. IN THE COURSE OF THEIR STAY VISITORS CALLED ON GENERAL YAKUBU GOWON; SPENT HIGHLY PUBLICIZED DAY IN ENUGU; HELD EXTENDED, SUBSTANTIVE TALKS WITH MEA PERMANENT SECRETARY JOE IYALLA AND AFRICA SECTION CHIEF OMOTAYO OGUNSULIRE; CALLED ON BUSINESSMEN AND VISITED INDUSTRIAL SITES; RECEIVED RARELY EXTENDED IYALLA HOME ENTERTAINMENT; ATTENDED EAST CENTRAL STATE FINANCE MINISTER UKWU'S LARGE AND VIRTUALLY PUBLIC RECEPTION; SUBMITTED THEMSELVES TO LONG AND TOUGH RADIO AND NEWSPAPER INTERVIEWS (COPIES BEING FORWARDED BY POUCH); AND SPENT BETTER PART OF ONE NIGHT IN HOME OF LAGOS UNIVERSITY VICE CHANCELLOR J. F. ADE AJAYI DINING AND DEBATING WITH CAREFULLY SELECTED SOCIAL SCIENCE PROFESSORS.

4. NEWSPAPER COVERAGE WAS WIDE AND VARIED, AND EDITORIAL COMMENTS POINTED. THE OBSERVER SAW THE VISIT AS A "VISION OF HOPE" FOR A SOUTH AFRICA IN WHICH "ALL RACES WOULD BE EQUAL". EGLIN AND PROGRESSIVE PARTY ENCOURAGING WRITER TO BELIEVE "THAT SOME DAY JUSTICE AND FAIR PLAY WOULD REIGN IN SOUTH AFRICA." THE NEW NIGERIAN IN STINGING REBUKE SAW "NO USEFUL PURPOSE" IN THE VISIT OF "THESE SO-CALLED LIBERALS" AND URGED THAT NIGERIA CONTINUE TO ISOLATE SA AND SUPPORT LIBERATION MOVEMENTS. RENAISSANCE SAW IN EGLIN AND SLABBERT EVIDENCE THAT "THERE ARE REASONABLE AND OBJECTIVE HUMAN BEINGS TO WHOM APARTHEID IS TOTALLY REPULSIVE AND IMMORAL POLICY."

5. THE FMG'S CAREFULLY WORDED OFFICIAL VIEW WAS EXPRESSED IN ITS INFORMATION BULLETIN (LAGOS 6900), WHICH IS INTENDED FOR DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN CONSUMPTION AS A STATEMENT OF GOVERNMENT ATTITUDE RATHER THAN AS EXACT ACCOUNT OF VISITORS' CALL ON GOWON.

6. COMMENT: IN A LONG TALK WITH AMBASSADOR, EGLIN AND SLABBERT STATED THEIR OBJECTIVES: TO ESTABLISH CONTINUING DIALOGUE WITH CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 LAGOS 07045 311556Z

ALL ELEMENTS OF NIGERIAN SOCIETY, LEADING HOPEFULLY TO VISITS BOTH WAYS; TO MAKE CLEAR THAT WHITES, IN SOUTH AFRICA AT LEAST, HAVE AS MUCH STAKE IN CONTINENTAL PROGRESS AS BLACKS; TO EXPLAIN TO ALL WHO WOULD LISTEN THAT LIBERATION MOVEMENTS WILL REINFORCE APARTHEID, DESPITE THEIR SEEMING SUCCESS IN THE PORTUGUESE TERRITORIES; TO DESCRIBE BLACK PROGRESS IN SA, ESPECIALLY ECONOMIC SUCCESS AND MANNER IN WHICH IT IS CHANGING SYSTEM; TO GAIN USEFUL INSIGHTS THAT MAY BE HELPFUL POLITICALLY AS THEY

FACE NEW SESSION OF PARLIAMENT; TO SEEK AREAS OF POSSIBLE ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND, FRANKLY, TO OBSERVE STYLE AND TONE OF LIFE IN BLACK-CONTROLLED COUNTRIES.

7. EVIDENCE AVAILABLE TO THE EMBASSY INDICATES NIGERIA SIMPLY SEIZED OPPORTUNITY THAT VISA APPLICATION OFFERED. APPARENTLY THERE WAS NO STUE I PLAN TO INVITE SAS OF ANY PARTY, AND INDEED FEDERATION IS LIKELY TO REMAIN OFF LIMITS TO VAST MAJORITY OF WHITES FROM REPUBLIC. STILL, ACCORDING TO GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND PROFESSORS, FMG SAW CHANCE TO MAKE CLEAR TO EGLIN AND SLABBERT DETERMINED OPPOSITION TO SA RACIAL POLICIES; TO DEMONSTRATE, NEVERTHELESS, REASONABLENESS AND WILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT MULTI-RACIAL SOCIETIES FOUNDED ON FREEDOM AND EQUALITY; TO BEAT DOWN WHAT NIGERIANS CONCEIVE AS WICKED SA PROPAGANDA THAT SUBSTITUTES MODICUM OF ECONOMIC PROGRESS FOR FREEDOM; TO SHOW PROGRESS OF FREE BLACK SOCIETY LONG THWARTED BY COLONIALISM AND IMPERIALISM AND ITS OWN WAR (HENCE ENUGU TRIP); AND, IN GENERAL, TO SEND MESSAGE TO REPUBLIC OF NIGERIAN PROSPERITY, FREEDOM, STRENGTH, AND WILL.

8. IN ESTABLISHING COMMUNICATION IN PREVIOUS AREA OF OUTER DARKNESS, VISIT WAS WORTH-WHILE. IN DUE COURSE WE SHOULD EXPECT VISITS BY OTHER PROGRESSIVE PARTY MEMBERS. HOWEVER, IN TERMS OF OBJECTIVES ON BOTH SIDES, THERE ARE NO CLEAR WINNERS. DIALOGUE AND MUTUAL EXCHANGES SEEM OUT OF QUESTION, OR AT BEST WILL REMAIN ONE-SIDED, SINCE NO NIGERIAN OF STATURE IS LIKELY TO RISK OPPROBRIUM THAT VISIT TO CONTEMPORARY SA MIGHT BRING. IYALLA AND OTHERS, IN RESPONSE TO VISITORS' INQUIRIES, STATED THAT OFFICIAL VISITS TO NIGERIA BY BLACK SA LEADERS SUCH AS CHIEF GATSHA BUTHELEZI WOULD BE "DIFFICULT TO ARRANGE," LEST THEY BE VIEWED AS FMG ACCEPTANCE OF SA HOMELANDS POLICY. ABOVEBOARD TRADE WITH SA IS NOT IN CARDS FOR FMG OR FOR ANY CONCEIVABLE SUCCESSOR GOVERNMENT. WHATEVER FMG'S REAL ASSESSMENT OF LIBERA-
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PAGE 04 LAGOS 07045 311556Z

TION MOVEMENT EFFECIVENESS, THERE WILL BE NO FORSAKING OF MOVEMENTS, PUBLICLY OR PRIVATELY. AND, ABOVE ALL ELSE, VISITORS' NOT SO SUBTLE CONTRASTS BETWEEN BLACK WELL BEING IN SA AS OPPOSED TO INDEPENDENT AFRICA, INCLUDING BY IMPLICATION NIGERIA, WILL LONG REMAIN CENTRAL POINT OF ANATHEMA REGARDLESS OF STATISTICS. NIGERIANS POINT OUT THAT THEY ARE FAMILIAR WITH THIS DATA AS THEY REGULARLY APPEAR AS PAID SA ADVERTISEMENTS IN LONDON PRESS.

9. ON OTHER HAND, EGLIN AND SLABBERT CAME OFF AS HONORABLE MEN SINCERELY ADVANCING WORTHY, IF VAIN CAUSE (EXCEPT, CURIOUSLY, IN MEETING WITH LAGOS UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS, WHO VIEWED THEM AS CLEANED-UP VORSTERS, APPARENTLY BECAUSE OF VISITORS' CONTINUAL REFERENCES TO ECONOMIC PROGRESS BY SA BLACKS DESPITE SYSTEM). WHILE NIGERIAN LINE OF DISCRIMINATION WAS HARD, OFFICIAL FMG

SPOKESMEN APPEARED AS REASONABLE, REALISTIC MEN INSTEAD OF
FIREBRANDS WHOM VISITORS SEEM TO HAVE EXPECTED.

10. INITIATIVE FOR ANY CONTINUING ACTIVITY RESTS WITH EGLIN AND
SLABBERT.

11. FOR PRETORIA: EMBASSY WILL BE GRATEFUL FOR REPORTS ON EGLIN
AND SLABBERT'S USE OF VISIT IN PUBLIC OR PRIVATE SA DISCUSSIONS.TA
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